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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 KARACHI 1750

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PK

SUBJECT: BALUCHISTAN--TRADITIONAL POLITICS OBSCURED BY
VIOLENCE AND VERBIAGE

REF: (A) KARACHI 1488 (B) KARACHI 1303 (C) ISLAMABAD 6998
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BEGIN SUMMARY: FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS REPRESENT CONGENOFF'S
IMPRESSIONS OF A BRIEF LATE AUGUST VISIT TO QUETTA. SITUATION
IN PROVINCE LESS SATISFACTORY THAN AT TIME OF CONSUL GENERAL'S
VISIT JULY 20-24 (REFTEL B). INCIDENCE OF CLASHES BETWEEN GOVERNMENT
FORCES AND DISSIDENTS HAS RISEN AND POLITICAL IMPASSE HAS BECOME
INCREASINGLY TENSE FOLLOWING AUGUST 16 ARREST OF PROVINCIAL
NAP LEADERS.

PRESENCE OF ARMY HIGHLY VISIBLE AND WHILE ACTION
CURRENTLY CENTERED IN MENGAL-MARRI TRIBAL AREAS INCIDENTS
MAY BE OCCURRING IN WIDER GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF PROVINCE. AT
BASIS OF CONFLICT IS MUTUAL DISTRUST, DISLIKE AND ANTAGONISM
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BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER AND AVAILABLE COMMANDING PROVINCIAL

LEADERSHIP FIGURES WHO UNWILLING TO ACCEPT SUBORDINATE, DEPENDENT ROLES IN GOVERNANCE OF PROVINCE. PRESENT EVENTS ARE CAUSING INCREASE IN SENTIMENTS OF BALUCH NATIONALISM, WHICH GOVERNMENT FORCE CAN CONTROL OR CONTAIN BUT NOT ERADICATE, IN ABSENCE OF A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN ANY FORM MOST LIKELY TO BE DESTABILIZING FACTOR TENDING PROLONG CONFRONTATION AND VIOLENCE. POSSIBILITY OF POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION MAY REMAIN, BUT BECOMES MORE ATTENUATED AS TIME PASSES, INCREASING PROSPECT THAT PROVINCE COULD REMAIN IN A DISTURBED STATE FOR SOMETIME. END SUMMARY.

1. INTRODUCTION: ON BRIEF VISIT TO QUETTA, AUGUST 27-29 INCLUDING TRIP BY ROAD TO KALAT TOWN IN JHALAWAN AREA, CONGEN POL OFFICER EXPOSED TO VARYING ASPECTS CURRENT SITUATION IN TROUBLED BALUCHISTAN. GENERAL IMPRESSION DERIVED, SUPPORTED AUGUST 28 BY GOVERNOR BUGTI IN PRIVATE DISCUSSION, IS THAT NUMBER OF INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE HAVE INCREASED SINCE ARRESTS OF PROVINCIAL NAP LEADERS (REFTEL A). GOVERNOR ESTIMATED THAT SINCE CHIEF MINISTER'S REPORT ON INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE AUGUST 16 (REFTEL A) THERE HAD BEEN CLASHES IN WHICH BETWEEN 40-50 KILLED FROM BOTH GOVERNMENT AND TRIBAL RANKS. ALTHOUGH CONTENDING POLITICAL GROUPS CONTINUE MOUNT SMALL DAILY PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS IN QUETTA THEY HAD YET TO PRODUCE MAJOR DISLOCATIONS AND HAVE GENERATED LITTLE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN QUETTA AMONG OTHER THAN CONVINCED OR SUBSIDIZED ADHERENTS. MILITARY PRESENCE IN QUETTA CANTONMENT, TOWN, AND ON ROAD TO KALAT, HIGHER AND MORE NOTICEABLE THAN AT ANY TIME IN PAST 3 YEARS. LOCAL OBSERVERS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, AND INVOLVED POLITICIANS SEE NO CLEAR PATH OUT OF PRESENT MORASS, NOR ANY EVENT ON HORIZON WHICH LIKELY TO BE OF CLIMACTIC CONSEQUENCE. CONGENOFF'S JUDGEMENT BASED ON TALKS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF CONCERNED GROUPS OTHER THAN MILITARY, IS THAT PRESENT SITUATION BASICALLY REFLECTION OF A CONFLICT AMONG STRONG-WILLED INDIVIDUALS MOTIVATED BY TRADITIONAL VALUES AND BEHAVIOR PATTERNS DESPITE FACT THAT FOR ONLOOKERS CONFLICT BEING COUCHED IN TERMS OF 20TH CENTURY POLITICS. PRESENT SITUATION MORE THAN EVER HIGHLIGHTS UNIQUE ABILITY ROLE OF PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO TO SELECT COURSE OF ACTION TO EXACERBATE SITUATION, PROLONG IT AS IT IS, OR AFFECT AMELIORATION. FEAR OF FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT CONSIDERED LATENT BY GOVERNOR BUGTI, VOICED AS CERTAIN FUTURE DEVELOPMENT BY INCREASINGLY DESPERATE OPPOSITION AND TOUTED AS DETERMIN-
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NANT BY ONLOOKERS SYMPATHETIC TO NEITHER SIDE AND UNABLE ADDUCE ANY OTHER EXPLANATION FOR PRESENT UNSATISFACTORY CONDITIONS OTHER THAN EXTERNAL INVOLVEMENT. BECAUSE OF THE CONFUSION AND OBFUSCATION LAYERED OVER A BASICALLY SIMPLE, ALBEIT, SOMEWHAT INTRACTABLE PROBLEM TO LOOK FURTHER THAN THE SHORT TERM IS HAZARDOUS EXERCISE INDEED. FOR NOW SITUATION LIKELY REMAIN AS IT IS WITH LEVEL OF INCIDENTS STABILIZING UNTIL THERE SOME SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT IN THE BACKGROUND STRUGGLE BETWEEN PER-

SONALITIES INVOLVED. FOR BHUTTO REGIME SITUATION PRESENTLY
APPEARS CONTAINABLE AND LIKELY REMAIN SO BARRING EXTERNAL
INVOLVEMENT WHILE AT SAME TIME SITUATION COULD BE MARKEDLY
IMPROVED IF PRIME MINISTER REALLY INTERESTED IN
POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION ON OTHER THAN HIS OWN TERMS. END INTRO-
DUCTION.

2. GOVERNOR BUGTI: ON AUGUST 28 GOVERNOR BUGTI TOLD CONGEN OFFICER
WHILE NUMBER OF CLASHES INCREASING, HE DID NOT CONSIDER THEM
OF CRISIS PROPORTION HE SAID ARREST OF NAP LEADERS WAS EFFECTED
BY CENTRAL, NOT PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT. HE HAD NO "PROOF" THAT
THERE ANY OTHER THAN "NORMAL" AFGHAN GOVERNMENT-DIRECTED
INVOLVEMENT IN PROVINCIAL SITUATION AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, IF
BALUCHISTAN SITUATION BECOMES PROLONGED AND NWFP PATHANS ALSO
BECOME INVOLVED IN A CONFRONTATION WITH GOVERNMENT BUGTI BE-
LIEVES AFGHAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BECOME ACTIVELY INVOLVED, BUT
FIRST WITH PATHANS AND ONLY SECONDARILY AND AS A SUPPORTIVE
MEASURE
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WITH BALUCH. BUGTI MADE POINT OF DERIDING PUBLIC MANIFESTATIONS BY POLITICAL OPPOSITION AND EXPRESSED DISDAIN AT AUGUST 28 FIRST EVER WOMEN'S DEMONSTRATION, LED BY IRISH-BORN NAP MNA BEGUM JENNIFER MUSA, STEPMOTHER OF IMPRISONED NAP MNA/MPA KHAIR BUX MARRI. ALTHOUGH GOVERNOR DID NOT MENTION IT, IT RELIABLY REPORTED HE PROFERRED RESIGNATION AUGUST 12 AND CURRENTLY STAYING ON AT PRIME MINISTER'S REQUEST MOST RELUCTANTLY LEST HE BECOME IRREVOCABLY IDENTIFIED WITH CURRENT MILITARY ACTION AS A BHUTTO TOOL ACTING AS OPPRESSOR OF BALUCH, A CHARACTERIZATION WHICH COULD EFFECTIVELY ERODE OR DEMOLISH HIS LOCAL POLITICAL BASE. IT MOST LIKELY BUGTI HIMSELF IS PLAYING NO DIRECT OR COMMANDING ROLE IN MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN PROVINCE WHICH SOLELY IN HANDS OF PAK MILITARY AND PRIME MINISTER IN ISLAMABAD.

UNDERLYING HIS ANOMALOUS POSITION, ONE OF BEING IN POSITION OF RESPONSIBILITY WITHOUT CONCOMITANT AUTHORITY, IT IS LIKELY BUGTI IS DISSATISFIED WITH GOP'S "WILL" TO DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY TO CRUSH OPPOSITION IN PROVINCE AND CONSEQUENTLY ESTABLISH HIS DOMINANCE. THUS, HE IS DETACHING HIMSELF LEST HE BECOME A VICTIM OF WHAT HE CONSIDERS HALF MEASURES. BUGTI'S PRICE--UNTRAMMELED
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AND POWER IN PROVINCE--WHICH HE WOULD USE TO ESTABLISH HIS UNDISPUTED CONTROL IS A PRICE WHICH PRIME MINISTER UNWILLING TO PAY TO ANY BALUCHISTAN FIGURE LEAST OF ALL A BALUCH AS UNPREDICTABLE AS AKBAR BUGTI.

3. THE OPPOSITION: NAP/JUI RANKS WITH SOME J-I SUPPORT, WHICH REPRESENT OPPOSITION IN A POLITICAL SENSE, HAVE SUFFERED FROM ARRESTS NOT ONLY OF FIRST TIER LEADERSHIP, BUT ALSO THE ROUNDUP OF SECOND AND THIRD ECHELON FIGURES. REMAINING OPPOSITION IS INCREASINGLY FRUSTRATED

AND DESPERATE. INTERESTINGLY THEIR VEHEMENCE NOT FOCUSED PRINCIPALLY ON GOVERNOR BUGTI, BUT ON PRIME MINISTER WHOM THEY HOLD RESPONSIBLE FOR THWARTING THEIR DEMOCRATICALLY RATIFIED RIGHT TO POLITICAL CONTROL

IN THE PROVINCE. THERE NO CLEAR EVIDENCE OF ANY COORDINATED DIRECTION BETWEEN FORMAL ORGANIZED POLITICAL OPPOSITION AND THOSE ENGAGED IN PHYSICAL RESISTANCE TO AUTHORITY IN THE RURAL AREAS, BUT TRADITIONAL TRIBAL LINKS PROVIDE A READY-MADE APPARATUS. RURAL AREA RESISTANCE CERTAINLY HAS A POLITICAL COMPONENT, BUT IT ALSO PROBABLY CONTAINS AN ELEMENT OF TRADITIONAL PRIDE IN BALUCH HERITAGE OF RESISTANCE TO AUTHORITY. OPPOSITION IS NOW RESORTING TO EXTREME ARGUMENTATION THAT BECAUSE OF PHYSICAL REPRESSION THEY BEING DRIVEN TO A SECESSIONISM AND WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT ASSISTANCE FROM WHATEVER QUARTER IT MAY COME. HOWEVER, IN NEAR TERM, RESISTANCE IN RURAL AREAS MIGHT CEASE IF POLITICAL PACKAGE ASSUAGING BALUCH HONOR IS FABRICATED. DESPITE THE STRIDENCY OF ARGUMENTATION ON BOTH SIDES POLITICAL COMPROMISE AND ACCOMMODATION REMAINS A FACTOR IN THE LOCAL SCENE AND HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE TO DEFINITELY ERADICATE THIS

POSSIBILITY IS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE. NONETHELESS, PRESENT GOVERNMENT ACTION IS REINFORCING AND STRENGTHENING SENTIMENTS OF BALUCH NATIONALISM WHICH THE MORE THEY FLOURISH BECOME MORE DIFFICULT TO CONTROL LET ALONE ERADICATE.

4. THE CONFLICT SITUATION: THUS FAR, GOVERNMENT FORCES--POLICE, LEVIES, SCOUTS, ELEMENTS OF THE PAKISTAN ARMY--AND TWO OF THE THREE PRINCIPAL BALUCH TRIBES, THE BRAUHI SPEAKING MENGALS AND BALUCH SPEAKING MARRIS HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN AN INCREASINGLY VIOLENT CONFRONTATION. THE THIRD PRINCIPAL BALUCH TRIBE, THE BUGTIS, HAVE BEEN SITTING THE ACTION OUT. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN SOME MINOR PUBLIC DISTURBANCES IN THE PATHAN SPEAKING NORTHERN AREAS OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PROVINCE, IT IS BELIEVED THAT THE PATHANS ARE NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE MENGAL-MARRIS AND IN REALITY ARE WATCHING WITH SOME RELISH THE DIVIDED BALUCH FIGHTING WITH THE GOVERNMENT. PUBLICIZED DISTURBANCES COMMENCED IN THE MARRI AREA AND WERE FOLLOWED BY INCIDENTS IN MENGAL INHABITED AREA OF KALAT DIVISION CALLED SARAWAN, SOUTH OF KHUZDAR AROUND THE AREA OF WAD, MENGAL'S HOMETOWN. DISTURBANCES HAVE SINCE SPREAD NORTH IN KALAT DIVISION TO THE JHALAWAN

AREA NORTH OF KHUZDAR AND INCIDENTS HAVE OCCURRED IN THE AREA BETWEEN KALAT AND QUETTA INCLUDING MASTUNG. THERE HAVE BEEN UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF INCIDENTS IN CHAGAI DISTRICT ADJOINING THE IRANIAN BORDER, YET IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH IF INCIDENTS ARE SPREADING GEOGRAPHICALLY ON A SIGNIFICANT SCALE OUTSIDE OF THE MENGAL-MARRI AREAS. ON AUGUST 28 GOVERNOR BUGTI TOLD CONGEN OFFICER THAT NUMBER OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS HAD INCREASED SINCE AUGUST 16 ARREST OF NAP LEADERS,

BUT DID THIS WITH UNCONCERNED, ALMOST DISINTERESTED, AIR AND REFUSED TO PREDICT CATEGORICALLY IF THIS TENDENCY WOULD CONTINUE, SITUATION WOULD STABILIZE, OR NUMBER OF INCIDENTS DECLINE. IN QUETTA, INCIDENTS ARE ALL DESCRIBED IN TERMS OF GUERRILLA ACTION, SMALL NUMBERS OF ARMED, MOTIVATED LOCALS ATTACKING OR HARASSING LESS MOBILE ELEMENTS OF THE MORE TRADITIONALLY ORGANIZED MILITARY OR PARA-MILITARY. IN THE MARRI AREA THE ARMY HAS APPARENTLY MOUNTED AN ACTIVE PROGRAM OF SEARCHING VILLAGES FOR WEAPONS AND THIS HAS CONTRIBUTED TO AN INCREASE OF INCIDENTS. THE ELDER BROTHER OF ARRESTED NAP MPA GUL KHAN NASEER, MIR LUANG KHAN, AGE 77, PRACTICALLY IMMOBILE BECAUSE OF GOUT, REPORTED KILLED ON AUGUST 7, DIED SITTING IN FRONT OF HIS HOUSE WHEN HE RESISTED GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS TO SEARCH HIS HOUSE, A SERIOUS VIOLATION OF BALUCH MORES. DISTURBING, BUT NOT UNEXPECTED, ARE ALLEGATIONS THAT ATROCITIES ARE BEING PERPETRATED ON BOTH SIDES. GOVERNMENT FORCES ARE BEING ACCUSED OF RAPE AND VIOLATION OF WOMEN
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AND ON THE OTHER HAND, A KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCE TOLD REPORTING OFFICER THAT THE 20 PLUS MILITARY KILLED IN A AUGUST 25 OR 26 INCIDENT IN MARRI AREA WERE MUTILATED AND DEFACED. WHEN WALI KHAN ARRIVED IN KARACHI FROM QUETTA ON SEPTEMBER 1, HE ANNOUNCED THAT HE HAD SEEN THE GRAVES OF SOME SOLDIERS IN QUETTA AND COMMENTED IT WAS SAD THEIR BODIES HAD NOT BEEN TURNED OVER TO THEIR FAMILIES. THESE ACCUSATIONS, TRUE OR NOT, TYPIFY THE UGLINESS AND BITTERNESS OF THE SITUATION. AS THE CONFLICT PROLONGS, SOME ARE WATCHING THE REACTIONS OF THE LOCAL LEVIES AND SCOUTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE GOVERNMENT PREDICTING THAT A TIME COULD COME, IF IT HASN'T IN ONE CASE ALREADY, WHEN THEY WILW BE CAUGHT BETWEEN CONFLICTING LOYALTIES AND SOME MAY DESERT THE GOVERNMENT RANKS WITH THEIR ARMS, OR CLASHES BETWEEN THE LOCAL RECRUITS AND THE ARMY MAY OCCUR. IN GENERAL, THE DIRECTION THE SITUATION WILL TAKE IS UNPREDICTABLE AND IT WELL COULD STABILIZE AT ITS PRESENT LEVEL SOMEWHAT EXPANDED GEOGRAPHICALLY AND GO ON FOR SOME TIME. INCREASING APPLICATION OF FORCE AND ISOLATION OF AFFECTED AREAS COULD STABILIZE SITUATION, BUT WOULD FAIL TO QUELL THE RESISTANCE SHORT OF NEAR ERADICATION OF THE DISSIDENTS.

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5. MILITARY PRESENCE: ON DEPARTING QUETTA BY AIR AUGUST 29 THE REPORTING OFFICER SAW APPROXIMATELY EIGHTEEN SINGLE-ENGINE JET FIGHTER-TYPE AIRCRAFT, FOURTEEN WITH CAMOFLAGE PAINT AND FOUR UNPAINTED PARKED AT THE AIRFIELD IN QUETTA. OBSERVED FROM THE AIR WERE TWO DOUBLE ROTOR HELICOPTERS PARKED AT THE NORTH END OF THE FIELD. DURING THE THREE-DAY VISIT JET AIRCRAFT COULD BE HEARD TO BE TAKING OFF QUITE FREQUENTLY AND ONE THREE-PLANE ELEMENT TOOK OFF 0925 MORNING OF AUGUST 27. IN THE CANTONMENT MUCH VEHICULAR TRAFFIC WAS NOTED AND QUETTA TOWN ITSELF IS PATROLLED NIGHTLY BY TROOPS AS ARE MANY OF THE OTHER TOWNS IN THE PROVINCE. ON THE ROAD TO KALAT MILITARY OUTPOSTS WERE OBSERVED AT THREE SPECIFIC LOCATIONS AND AT A FOURTH A CAMP OF SOME SORT WAS SEEN ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF KALAT AT THE HOUSE OF NAP MPA PRINCE AGHA ABDUL KARIM WHICH THE MILITARY HAS TAKEN OVER. TRAFFIC ON MOST ROADS IN THE PROVINCE HAS BEEN PROHIBITED DURING THE NIGHT-TIME AND OUTPOSTS ON THE ROAD TO KALAT ONCE MANNED ON A DAWN TO DUSK BASIS ARE NOW MANNED ON A 24-HOUR BASIS. ALTHOUGH GOVERNOR'S MILITARY SECRETARY DENIED ANY NEW MILITARY COMMAND STRUCTURE HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED IN QUETTA, OTHERS BELIEVE THAT A CORPS HEADQUARTERS OR ELEMENTS THEREOF HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED AND A LT. GEN. AWAN IS IN CHARGE. REPORTEDLY ISID IS CONDUCTING BRIEFINGS FOR THE GOVERNOR AND SOME OF HIS STAFF DAILY IN THE LATE AFTERNOON. WHAT THE ARMY'S REACTION IS TO ITS ROLE IN BALUCHISTAN IS UNKNOWN, BUT IT IS CERTAIN THAT THOSE TROOPS DEPLOYED IN THE FIELD ARE LESS THAN COMFORTABLE AND IN SOME AREAS UNDER A DEGREE OF TENSION BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT IN WHICH THEY ARE INVOLVED.

6. COMMENT: THOSE WHO ATTEMPT TO DRAW AN ANALOGY BETWEEN THE SITUATION IN BALUCHISTAN IN THE MID-60 AYUB DAYS, OR TO EVENTS IN BANGLADESH ARE ENGAGING IN DANGEROUS AND MISLEADING OVERSIMPLIFICATIONS. THERE ARE COMMON ELEMENTS IN ALL THREE SITUATIONS, BUT THE SITUATION TODAY IN BALUCHISTAN IS UNIQUE AND STEMS BASICALLY FROM A POLITICAL CONFLICT BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND LOCAL POLITICAL FIGURES WHO ARE UNABLE TO REACH A POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION. AS THE OPPOSITION SEES IT, BHUTTO IS FOLLOWING A RULE OR RUIN POLICY IN BALUCHISTAN, WHILE THE PRIME MINISTER FINDS HIMSELF CONFRONTED WITH INTRACTABLE, BENIGHTED LOCAL LEADERS WHO ARE UNABLE TO APPRECIATE THAT WHAT HE IS OFFERING THEM ALONG THE LINES OF POLITICAL COMPROMISE IS ALL THAT HE CAN

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GRANT AND STILL MAINTAIN A POSITION OF ABSOLUTE POLITICAL DOMINATION WHICH IS ESSENTIAL TO MAINTENANCE OF PAKISTAN'S UNITY AND INTEGRITY. THERE APPEARS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF THE RIGID POSITIONS ON EITHER SIDE BECOMING MORE MAILEABLE, HENCE IMPROVEMENT IN THE

PRESENT SITUATION SEEMS UNLIKELY. THE QUESTION THEREFORE
BECOMES WILL IT DETERIORATE FURTHER AND IF IT DOES WHAT ARE
IMPLICATIONS FOR BHUTTO AND PAKISTAN.
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